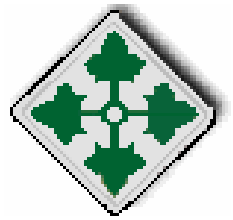




**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**  
Headquarters, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion (Mechanized), 8<sup>th</sup> Infantry  
4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division (Mechanized)  
Forward Operating Base Kalsu, North Babil, Iraq



10 February 2006

To Whom It May Concern:

Life has a funny way of pointing you in a direction, regardless of whether you are looking that way or not. In any case with me it was the not. I had never played with G.I. Joes. I had no military influence from any one in my family. Nor, had I any dreams of being a soldier. None the less, I still made it to where I am standing today.

At 17, my entire family had written me off as a pipe dreamer. Not to mention I was raised by a mother who couldn't keep herself out of prison. They had assumed I would follow in her foot steps, destined to wind up in jail and prison several times. They may have had slight reason to, since I dropped out of high school and got my GED. A short time later I started to talk of the army. Everyone just said "yeah okay" and, just left it at that. They had just thought it was just another pipe dream. They assumed I would work at Burger King until inevitable I was jailed for something. On occasion, the underdog overcomes. In this situation I was that underdog. I went into a make it or break it situation and, I accomplished something. The greatest part of it is every time I see my dad he tells me that he is proud of me and, he is sorry for writing me off too easily. That is why I joined. To make myself. To make my family proud. Most importantly, to claim my stake in life.

In the second paragraph of the Declaration of Independence it states "...that all men are created equal, they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and Pursuit of Happiness..." This is a statement that our nation embraces to be true. Under Saddam's rule the Iraqi people didn't have these rights. When you see an Iraqi pursuing these rights, I think it brings a great sense of pride. So when I think of what it is like serving our country in a time of war, that is what I think of, pride. I am proud to follow in the steps of my forefathers. From the American Revolution to OIF and, every sacrifice made in between.

Our country needs us now more than ever. To help the world maintain a balance of power, that would otherwise be knocked out of balance by tyrants like Osama, Saddam, and more recently Zarqawi. Without a country, like ours, very few if any, would stand up to the bullies of the world. Not only does our country need us but, the world needs us to an extent. For as it states in the Soldier's Creed "We are the guardians of freedom..."

As for life on FOB Kalsu it is greatly different from life at the Alamo, the Casino and, my later days at FOB Thunder. The largest FOB I stayed at last time only had a little over 300 soldiers.

Technology and comfort has crept its way to all the corners of Iraq. To include here at Kalsu. A soldier can get on the internet or phone at almost anytime. That seems to make the distance between us and home greatly shortened. The PX and Iraqi Wal-Mart allow us to purchase items whether needed or wanted without having to get items sent by mail. As for the conexes and GP mediums they are a God send. They allow privacy, yet still allow for accountability of soldiers and sensitive items.

We, as American soldiers, have a wide variety of roles when it comes to working with the Iraqi army. The first and probably most important is, we need to make them a very stable force. The reason this is so important is after we leave the IA needs to be able to hold their own against the insurgent forces that will most certainly appear. The Iraqi army will need the best training we can give, to fight off all the future undermining attacks. The insurgents would love to see them fail so they can continue with their terrorist agenda.

Another important role we have in working with the IA is to ensure a slow, steady and, stable transition from us to them. This is important for several reasons. First, if we were to just throw an unstable nation into their laps I am pretty certain things wouldn't be very successful for them. Next, the eyes of the world are upon the IA and us. For the most part they want to see us fail. If the IA is to fail, it is a failure on our part as well.

Last but not least, with all the sacrifices we and the Iraqi people have made, possibly the most important thing we have in our role with working with the IA is to ensure a successful future for the people of Iraq. Through dedication, training and, leadership this is a very possible goal.

In conclusion, we have a very important role in working with the IA. Probably, for the most of us, the hope and freedom we establish in Iraq will be one of the greatest things we accomplish in our lives. I am very grateful and proud to have that accomplishment under my belt, as are all of the fine soldiers I work with on a daily basis.

Signed,

Sgt. Anthony Fisher